

The LAMB in the midst of the Throne.

A
74.
S E R M O N,

UPON Rev. vii. 17.

Preached immediately before the Celebration of
the Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER, at
Dunfermline, June 10. 1733.

To which is added,

A Word at the Close of the Solemnity on the
Monday.

By the late Reverend
Mr. RALPH ERSKINE,
Minister of the Gospel at Dunfermline. ✓

*A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place
of our sanctuary, Jer. xvii. 12.*

GLASGOW.

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S E R M O N.

REV. vii. 17. *For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed them, &c.*

WE are met this day to celebrate the memorials of the love of Christ, in his death and crucifixion, upon mount Calvary. And that our faith may look to him in the best light, and to the best advantage, we are to remember, not only where he once was, but where he now is: and we will find, we need not be ashamed of a *crucified Christ* that was once upon the *cross*, for now he is upon the *throne*. The Lamb that was slain, as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice for us, the once dying Lamb in the midst of the cross, is now the everliving Lamb in the midst of the throne. And from this throne of God; where he reigns, we expect our food and provision upon the feast-day; according to the words of the text, *The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them.*

From the 13th verse of this chapter we have a description of the *honour* and *happiness* of these that shall faithfully serve, and patiently suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ. Some interpreters think, that the happiness of the saints militant, even in this world, is here described; some, that it is only the happiness of the saints triumphant in heaven; others, make this place of scripture relate to both, and with these especially I join; because whatever honour and happiness of suffering saints is here set forth, they enjoy the same partly in this life, and fully in the life to come, as may appear by the particulars here mentioned.

The happy persons are spoken of, ver. 14th, *These are they that have come out of great tribulation.*

Whatever relation some think this may have to the church of Christ on earth, after they have escaped the Antichristian bloody persecution; or, as others, to the martyrs in heaven, that have suffered unto death for the Lord Jesus Christ; yet it may be said of all the militant saints, who, through much trouble, enter into the kingdom of heaven, and therein are conformed to their suffering head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and *bear about in their body the dying of the Lord Jesus.* Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of them all. It may be said of all the saints, these are they that have come from trouble to rest, from bondage to liberty, from death to life, and have *washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* The perfection of this purity they have in heaven; but even here on earth they are washed in the blood of Christ, and clothed with the white robe of his imputed and imparted righteousness.

Ver. 15th, 'Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.' This seems to be a further description of the happiness of the saints both militant and triumphant: as they are happy,

1. In their *state*, being 'washed, justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of their God.'

2. They are happy in their *station*, being always *before the throne of God.* The glorified saints in heaven are always in that presence where there is *fulness of joy*; and the sanctified ones upon earth have this blessing also bestowed upon them, they are said to *sit with him in heavenly places*; and it is their daily work to come *boldly to the throne of grace.* Again.

3. They are happy in their *service*; for, *they serve him day and night in the temple.* Though these that are in heaven serve him without weakness or weariness, which we cannot here do; yet it is the property of all the true circumcision to *worship God in the Spirit and in truth*, and to *pray without ceasing*; *meditating on his law day and night*, and *going to the altar of God*; to God in Christ, the true spiritual temple.

4. They are happy in their *company*; for, 'he that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.' This points out friendship, fellowship, and familiarity between God and the redeemed; which also Christ allows to the militant saints in part, when, upon opening the door of their heart, he *comes in and sups with them, and they with him*, Rev. iii. 20. And they are in case to say, 'Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Christ, 1 John i. 3. yea, God says, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.'

5. They are happy in their *freedom*; and shall be freed from all want, and all uneasiness. From all *want*; for, 'they shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more:' for this freedom will be perfected in heaven, as it is commenced on earth; as the prophet says, speaking of Christ's spiritual kingdom, Isa. xlix. 10. *They shall not hunger, nor thirst, &c.* Hence says Christ, John vi. 35. 'He that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst;' pointing out the spiritual pleasure and satisfaction they shall have, and never be altogether deprived of. From all *uneasiness* also shall they be freed; 'neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; or, as it is in the forecited, Isa. xlix. 10. Neither shall the heat

‘nor sun smite them.’ The redeemed above are perfectly freed from all uneasiness; and even the redeemed on earth, according to the measure of faith, such will be their measure of ease, even amidst all things that tend to make them uneasy. Christ says to them, ‘Fear not, only believe; Fear not, I am with you; Fear not him that can at most but kill the body; The very hairs of your head are all numbred:’ you may be perfectly easy. Nothing is more uneasy than the sun in the meridian regions; so are afflictions and persecutions to the saints, and the temptations they are attacked with from earth and hell: but ‘God is faithful,’ says the apostle, ‘who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will with the temptation also make away to escape, that you may be able to bear it,’ 1 Cor. x. 12.

6. They are happy in their *provision*; because *The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them*; hence he is said to *feed his flock like a shepherd*. The *feeding* here spoken of, imports also *rule and government*, such as a shepherd hath over his flock. It is in the believing view of the provident loving shepherd, the Psalmist says, *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*, Psal. xxiii. 1.

7. They are happy in their *direction and conduct*; in their director, guide, and conductor: *He shall lead them unto living fountains of waters*. Now, of these living waters the Lord Jesus speaks, as they respect even his people in this world, John ix. 14. and vii. 38. ‘The water that I give, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life; and, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters.’ By these they have matter of comfort amidst all their crosses. Hence,

8. They are here said to be happy in their *joys*;

for, *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*; that is, all their griefs and sorrows shall be swallowed up with the fulness of joy and consolation that shall be abundantly allowed them. The commencement of this joy is even here, amidst all the troubles and trials of the militant saints; 'For behold, says God, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard, Isa. lxxv. 18. And hence they are sometimes filled with joy and peace in believing; yea, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

It is the first part of this last verse that I have especially my eye upon; particularly, that description of our Lord Jesus Christ, which the comments, I have consulted, pass over more slightly than I expected, namely, *The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne*. Where we have our Lord Jesus described, 1. From his *meekness* and *humility*; therefore he is called *the Lamb*. 2. From his *majesty* and *authority*; he is *the Lamb in the midst of the throne*. What benefits accrues to his church, from his meek and majestic government, follows in the rest of the verse, which, if I have time, I may a little insist upon. But what I especially propose to speak to, as the Lord may assist, is, From the sweet account given us here of our Lord Jesus. And this we shall essay in the following doctrinal proposition.

OBSERV. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb in the midst of the throne of God.

And, as the Psalmist says, Psal. cxxi. 1. 'I will lift mine eyes unto the hills, from whence comes my help;' so let us lift our eyes to the throne, from whence comes our food to-day: and we may the more readily and joyfully do so, that the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, to be

the feeder. That I may open and apply this doctrine for our benefit, I propose the following method.

I. Speak a little of the *Lamb*.

II. Of the *throne*.

III. *How* the *Lamb* comes to be upon the throne.

IV. What is *imported* in the *Lamb's* being *in the midst of the throne*.

V. Consider the benefit of *feeding*, that issues from the *Lamb's* being in the midst of the throne.

I. We are to offer a word concerning the *Lamb*. This is a name frequently given to our Lord Jesus in scripture; and he is so called, both because of his immaculate whiteness and innocency, and because of his incomparable meekness and patience: he is *a Lamb without blemish, and without spot*, 1 Pet. i. 19. and his meekness was matchless, of which more afterward: he is the *Lamb of God*, the *worthy Lamb*, the *Lamb that was slain*.

I shall only here mention four periods wherein he is represented as a *Lamb*.

1. In his *designation* from the beginning, yea, from all eternity to be a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice: hence, Rev. xiii. 8. he is called 'the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*;' slain *decretively*, in the purpose of God, before the foundation of the world was laid; and slain *typically*, in all the sacrifices under the law.

2. In his *manifestation*, when he appeared in our nature, he is pointed out as the *Lamb that was come to be a sacrifice for sin*, John i. 29. 'Behold 'the *Lamb of God*, that taketh away the sins of the world;' and again, ver. 36. *Behold the Lamb of God*. To this purpose says the same beloved disciple, 1 John iii. 5. 'You know that he was manifested to take away our sin.'

3. In his *humiliation*, unto death, he is represented as the meek and patient Lamb, Acts viii. 32. 'He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth; which are the words of the prophet, Isa. liii. 7. Thus saith the Lord by the same prophet, ch. l. 5, 6. He was not rebellious, neither turned away back; I gave my back to the smiter, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.'

4. In his *exaltation*, or in the exalted estate, he is in scripture represented as a Lamb; particularly, Rev. v. 6. 'And I behold, and lo, in the midst of the throne and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain,' &c. This is the place that our present text hath a reference unto: and therefore, concerning it you may observe the description given of this Lamb.

(1.) As the Lamb that is in the *midst of the throne*; of which more afterward. Only, you see, in his exalted estate at the Father's right hand, he is still the Lamb; change of place hath not made him change his name, or nature: he took our human nature along with him; and he is still the meek and lowly Lamb, though he be upon the throne.

(2.) He is described by being a *Lamb slain*; a *Lamb as it had been slain*. He appears with the marks of his sufferings upon him, to show that he interceeds in heaven in the virtue of his satisfaction; because he *entred the holy place by his own blood*, Heb. ix. 12. And the virtue of the sacrifice he offered is always fresh, as if he were newly slain.

(3.) He is described as a Lamb having *seven horns*; pointing out the perfection of his power to execute all the will of God, and to conquer all his enemies. This Lamb is the *power of God*.

(4.) He is described as a Lamb having *seven eyes*; pointing out the perfection of his *wisdom*, to understand all the will of God, and to do it in the most effectual manner. As he is the *POWER of God*, so he is the *WISDOM of God*; for he hath the Spirit of God *above measure*: therefore it is said, *The seven eyes are the seven spirits of God*; not seven in number or in nature, but in respect of the diversity of the gifts and operations of that one and eternal Spirit of God: this Lamb of God, then, is he that hath the *Spirit of the Lord God upon him*, for he hath anointed him; and he is anointed, that he may anoint. And, O may the Lamb, with the seven eyes, look upon this assembly, and give eyes to us to see his glory this day, that our hearts may join issue with the heavenly company, Rev. v. 12. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

II. The next thing we proposed, was a word concerning the *throne*. Here we would shortly consider, what for a throne it is, and why called a throne.

1st, What kind of a throne it is which the Lamb is said to be in the midst of? I may answer, It is the *throne of God*, Rev. xxii. 1, 3. There it is called *the throne of God and of the Lamb*; the throne of God is the throne of the Lamb, and the throne of the Lamb is the throne of God; it is the throne of his *grace*, the throne of his *glory*, the throne of his *holiness*, and the throne of his *justice*.

1. It is called the throne of divine *grace*, Heb. iv. 16. *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace*. Why? because we have a *High-priest* there; the Lamb is in the midst of the throne. And, indeed, the throne of grace is nothing else than a God in

Christ, a God reconciled in Christ, a God upon a mercy-seat, sprinkled with the blood of Christ.

2. It is called the throne of divine *glory*, Jer. xiv. 21. 'Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not covenant with us.' The prophet there speaks of the temple, and the ark in it, the symbol of God's presence; which was typical of Christ, in whom the covenant of grace stands fast: and so it is called the throne of glory, because all the glory of God shines about the throne. As the grace of God is the glory of God, so all the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ: therefore,

3. It is called a throne of divine *holiness*, Psal. xlvii. 8, *God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness*. Holiness becomes his house, holiness becomes his throne, and holiness is his throne; there is nothing there, but the holy God, the holy Lamb, the holy throne; and they that are about it cry, *Holy, holy, hāy is the Lord of hosts*, Isa. vi. 3.

4. It is called the throne of his *justice*, Psal. lxxxix. 14. 'Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne. And Psal. xcvi. 2. Clouds and darkness are round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.' His glorious and holy throne of grace stands firm upon the base and foundation of justice satisfied for the sinner, and judgment execute against sin, in the blood of the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne. It is therefore no hindrance or impediment to our access to the throne of grace, that it is also a throne of justice; but rather a furtherance and encouragement, because there 'grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ,' Rom. v. 21. And, since grace reigns there through justice-satisfying righteousness,

why then, there God may with honour meet with sinners, and there sinners may with hope draw near to God.—This is the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2dly, Why it is called a *throne*? The place, in the midst whereof the Lamb is, is called a throne, on these accounts;

1. A throne is a place of powerful and majestic glory, honour, and dignity. Jesus Christ, the Lamb, is set in the midst of this place, *crowned with glory and honour*, Heb. ii. 9. His Father hath crowned him King there, saying, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*

2. A throne is a place of power and authority. Christ the Lamb, is set in the midst of this throne; for, ‘All power in heaven and earth is given to him,’ Matth. xxviii. 18. *All judgment is committed to him; and the government is upon his shoulders.*

3. A throne is a place of height and eminency. Christ the Lamb, is in the midst of this place, Isa. vi. 7. ‘I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.’ His Father hath set him on the highest throne; he ‘hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.’

4. A throne is a place of plenty; thence the royal bounty is communicated. Christ, the Lamb, is in the midst of this place; hence it is said, Col. i. 19. ‘It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;’ and again, ‘In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all the treasures of grace: and out of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace,’ John i. 6.

5. A throne is a place of beauty as well as bounty; it is a beautiful and splendid place. And to see the Lamb in the midst of the throne, is to see the King

in his beauty, Isa. xxxiii. 17. 'Strength is within his holy place, and there doth beauty shine; there doth glory shine.

6. In a word, a throne is a place of *pleasure, peace, joy, and triumph*. The Lamb is in the midst of this place: having *ascended up on high, and led captivity captive*, Psal. lxviii. 18. he sits triumphant upon the throne, *making all his enemies his foot-stool*. If he triumphed over them on the cross, as it is said, Col. ii. 15. how much more does he triumph over them on the throne, making all believers sharers of his joyful triumph!

III. The *third* thing I proposed was, To shew how the Lamb comes to be upon the throne. I shall tell you in a few words, that he *bargained* for the throne, he *wrought* for the throne, he *fought* for the throne, he *died* for the throne.

1. He *bargained* for the throne. In the counsel of peace, betwixt the Father and the Son, it was promised to Christ, that, upon his doing and suffering for his people, he should have a glorious throne, and a numerous retinue: that he should *see his seed, and see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied*, Isa. liii. 10, 11. The Lamb cries out, it is a bargain that I cheerfully go in to: 'Lo I come; in the volume of thy book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is within my heart; Psal. xl. 7, 8. Hence says the Father, I have made a covenant with my chosen,' Psal. lxxxix. 3.

2. He *wrought* for the throne. According to the bargain and covenant between the Father and him, he *brought in everlasting righteousness*, Dan. ix. 24. he *fulfilled all righteousness*, Matth. iii. 15. And hence he claims the crown and the throne; 'I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work

'thou garest me to do: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the glory I had with thee before the world was,' John xvii. 4, 5. Thus he wrought for the throne.

3. He *fought* for the throne. Ye may see how he fought, Isa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel? and thy garments like him that traderh in the wine fat? And on this account the Lamb sits upon a triumphant throne, having spoiled principalities and powers; bruised the head of the old serpent; destroyed the works of the Devil; and come off the field like a victorious conqueror. Therefore the Lord said unto our Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,' Psal. cx. 1. where you read both of the bloody battle, and the glorious enthronement of the Lamb.

4. He *died* for the throne: 'Having drunk of the brook in the way, therefore did he lift up the head,' Psal. cx. 7. And, because 'he became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross: therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name,' Phil. ii. 8, 9. When he had the cross upon his back, he had the throne in his eye; 'For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God,' Heb. xii. 2. And thus, 'for the suffering of death he was crowned with glory and honour,' chap. ii. 9. Our faith then may see and be satisfied how he came by the throne. But for widening and increasing faith's view of this enthronement, I proceed,

IV. To the next thing proposed, namely, To show what may be *imported* in the Lamb's being in the midst of the throne. And,

1. That the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, speaks forth the *dignity* of his person, his *supreme deity*, and *equality* with the Father. Though, in him infinite love, he thought it no disparagement, at his Father's call, to 'make himself of no reputation, and take upon him the form of a servant; yet being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' Philip. ii. 6. And his Father thinks it no disparagement to him, to call even the suffering Lamb, the crucified Jesus, his *fellow* and equal; 'Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow,' Zech. xiii. 7. yea, to crown him King upon his everlasting throne, saying to him, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,' Heb. i. 8. O Sirs, if the Christ-disparaging and soul-damning doctrine of Arians were true, the Lamb would not be worthy of such a throne, far less the midst of the throne.

2. That the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, imports and speaks forth the *height of his exaltation*. Beside the *natural* right as God, that Christ hath to the throne, he hath a *donative* right as Mediator; and because, as Mediator, he hath brought in *glory to God in the highest*; therefore, he is exalted to the highest throne that his Father can give him: 'I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth,' Psal. lxxxix. 27. And now, according to his promise, 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, That God hath made that same Jesus that was crucified, both Lord and Christ,' Acts ii. 36. And being now possessed of the throne, 'he hath on his vesture and on his thigh written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF

‘LORDS;’ and the rather that it is a scarlet robe, a *vesture, dypt in blood*, Rev. xix. 13, 16. to show, that it is the worthy Lamb that was slain that is in the midst of the throne.

3. That the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, imports, I think, the *perfection of his mediation*, and *exactness* thereof. O but this part of the throne be fit for him, and he fit for it! It well becomes him to be there; he is the middle person between the Father and the Holy Ghost, and the middle person between God and man; and it well becomes him to have the middle part of the throne. The Mediator and midsmen having the midst of the throne, it says, he is a perfect Mediator, a *merciful and faithful High priest*, Heb. ii. 17. faithful to God, and merciful to man; true to both parties, between whom he stands in the midst of the throne.

4. That the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, imports the *beautiful order and equity of his administration*. As the government is upon his shoulders, so it will be a just, righteous, and equal government, ‘Behold a King shall reign in righteousness; even the man that shall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, Isa. xxxii. 1, 2. With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins,’ Isa. xi. 4, 5. His administration shall be so righteous and equal, that none shall have occasion to complain that he hath gone too far, either to the right-hand or to the left-hand of the throne: no; he will for ever keep the midst of the throne; and his government, like his covenant, will be *well-ordered in all things*.

5. That the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, imports the *accessibleness* of the throne of God on

every hand. The Lamb is upon the throne of God, and therefore there is access to the throne; for, the Lamb being there, clothed with his vesture dipped in blood, we may come *boldly to the throne of grace*, and have *Boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. iv. 16. and x. 19. If the Lamb were not there, such guilty sinners durst not be so bold as to look a just and holy God in the face, or approach to his throne: but, O good news! The Lamb being our *forerunner*, we may boldly go as far foreward, as the blood of the Lamb hath run in like a river before us; and that is to the very heart and centre of the throne of God. Yea, not only is the Lamb *upon* the throne, which speaks access thither; but he is in the *midst* of the throne, which speaks access on every hand, and on every side of the throne. If he were only placed at the *one side* of the throne, it might be thought there would be no access at the *other side*; but being in the *midst* of the throne, he is ready to welcome all comers from all quarters, saying, *Whosoever will, let him come*, from east, west, north, or south; let him come on this side, or that side, or or directly before the throne; yea, let any poor creature, who thinks shame to be seen, come creeping, as it were, behind the throne, like the woman with the bloody issue, who came behind him, saying, *If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole*. O to get in if it were behind the throne this day; to get a touch of the royal robes of the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne! Welcome sinner, there is access on every hand of the throne, for the Lamb is in the midst of it. The Lamb of God, which lies in the midst of his Father's bosom, he sits in the midst of his Father's throne, to welcome and receive all comers, saying, *Him*

that cometh, I will in no ways cast out.

6. That the Lamb is in the midst of the throne imports, that the Lamb is the *centre* of all the glory that furrounds and encompasses the throne of God, or the throne of grace.—He is the centre of *divine fulness*, and of all the glorious perfections of God; for, *in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. Every attribute of God shines gloriously in the face of Jesus Christ.—He is the centre of all *divine truth*; and we cannot know any precious gospel truths, or mysteries, in a saving and satisfying manner, unless we *know the truth as it is in Jesus*, Eph. iv. 21.—He is the centre of all *divine promises*, being the centre of the covenant of grace, in whom it stands fast, and in whom all the promises are, *yea and amen, to the glory of God*, 2 Cor. i. 20.—He is the centre of all *divine blessings*; for, God blesses us with *all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, only in Christ*, Eph. i. 3.—He is the centre of all *divine grace*; for, it is *out of his fulness that we receive, and grace for grace*, John i. 16.—He is the centre of all *divine comfort*; for, he is the *consolation of Israel*, and he is *anointed with the oil of joy and gladness above his fellows*, Psal. xlv. 7. that he may anoint with the same oil, and bring his people to fellowship with him in the same Spirit of joy and consolation, according to their measure.—He is the centre of all *saving offices*: being, as a *Prophet*, the *wisdom of God*, for our *illumination*; as a *Priest*, the *righteousness of God*, for our *justification*; and, as a *King*, the *power of God*, for our *sanctification*.—He is the centre of all *sweet relations*; the *Saviour*, the *Surety*, the *head*, the *husband*, the *all and in all* of his people; their *light and life*, and *strength*, and *righteousness*, and *rock*, and *refuge*, and *portion*.—He is the *central place*,

where God and man may meet together; for, he dwells between the cherubims, on the mercy-seat, and over these; *There will I meet with thee*, Exod. xxv. 22. *There will I commune with thee*. And no communion with God can we have but in him, who is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and middle person between God and us.—In a word, being in the centre of the throne, he is the centre of *all things*: he is the centre of all the *sins* of the redeemed, for their expiation; for, ‘the Lord hath laid on him, [or, *made to meet in him*,] the iniquity of us all,’ Isa. liii. 6.—And the centre of all their *service*, for their acceptation; for, *we are accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. And thus he is someway the centre of all things; for, as *all things are in his hands*, so all things in *heaven and earth* are said to *meet in him*, Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 20. And therefore, the Lamb who is in the midst and centre of the throne, ought to be the centre of our hearts and affections, the centre of our love and delight. Thus, among other things, he is the centre of all our *provision*. Which leads to,

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, which was, to view the benefit of *feeding* that issues from the Lamb’s being in the midst of the throne; *He shall feed them*. Whatever other pastoral care, rule, or government this word imports; yet I shall, because this is a feast-day, consider that part of his pastoral care that is here express by the word *Feed*: ‘The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them.’ If I were to enlarge upon this subject, I might tell you how the Lamb feeds his church and people, with the *manifestations* of his glory, with the *intimations* of his love, with the *communications* of his grace, and with the *consolations* of his Spirit: but I confine myself to the *doctrine* of the Lamb being in the

midst of the throne; and therefore I shall speak to this *feeding* only as it relates to that *doctrine*. The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne is the food; the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne is the feeder; and the Lamb's being in the midst of the throne makes the feeding of those that are the followers of the Lamb, to have the following qualities. All our sacramental food and provision, this day, must come from the throne of God, and of the Lamb. Therefore,

1. It must be *kindly* food and provision that comes from that throne, since the Lamb is in the midst of it. The meek Lamb, the loving Lamb, that 'feeds his flock like a shepherd, gathers the lambs with his arms, carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young, Isa. xl. 11. He 'makes them to lie down in green pastures,' Psal. xxiii. 2. He makes them to *go out and in and find pasture*, John x. 9. It is sweet and easy, and kindly feeding, that issues from the Lamb in the midst of the throne. And yet,

2. It must be *powerful* feeding that comes from thence; it is from the throne of power: and, indeed, you will not feed to advantage this day, unless power come from the throne to make you take your food. It is the work of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, to feed by the efficacy of his grace: all the means and ministers in the world cannot make a soul open its mouth or heart for this food, till power come from the throne; and yet, when it cometh, it comes so sweetly and kindly, that there is nothing like force or violence. The man is made as frank and free, in the going out after Christ, to be the food of his perishing soul, as if there were no power at all put forth in the case. Power makes him eat and feed heartily; 'Thy peo-

‘ple shall be willing in the day of thy power,’
Psal. cx. 3.

3. It must be *spiritual* feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midst of the throne; for his throne, his kingdom, is a spiritual kingdom, it is not of this world: *The flesh profits nothing; his words are spirit and life.* Food for the soul must be spiritual food: ‘The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,’ Rom. xiv. 17.

4. It must be *plentiful* provision and feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midst of the throne; for it is a rich throne, and *all fulness* is there. There is plenty of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; abundance of all sorts. Here is *wisdom* enough, for the most ignorant; *righteousness* enough, for the most guilty; *sanctification* enough, for the most filthy; *redemption* enough, for the most ruined; *comfort* enough, for the most sorrowful; *strength* enough, for the weakest; ‘They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house,’ Psal. xxxvi. 8. O the plenty that is about the throne! Plenty of divine *perfections* to feed upon, when viewed in Christ. Indeed, the mildest attributes of God, out of Christ, will be a terrible sight; but the most terrible attributes of God, in Christ, are a pleasant feast; even *justice, holiness, and truth.* Here is plenty of *promises* to feed upon, while the performance is delayed. Every thing in Christ is a feast; his names, and natures, offices, life, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession; his merit, his Spirit, his word, his flesh, his blood, and his victory.

5. It must be *suitable* food that comes from this quarter; for, the Lamb, being in the midst of the throne, will distribute equally and suitably. He

cannot possibly fail and miscarry, by giving too much, or too little: being in the middle of the throne, and the middle person between God and man, to communicate, what is suitable for God to give, and suitable for man to have, no more and no less does he communicate, because he is the Lamb in the midst of the throne. And, indeed, as a key is suited to a lock, so is Christ's fulness to our wants. We are *diseased*, he is a *physician*; we are *lost*, he is a *Saviour*; we are *debtors*, he is a *surety*; we are *dead*, he is *life*; we are *blind*, he is *eye-salve*; we are *naked*, he is *clothing*; we are *troubled*, he is *rest*; are we *bewildered*? he is a *guide*; are we in *danger*? he is a *guard*: are we *benighted*? he is a *sun*: are we *assaulted*? he is a *shield*.—Who in heaven or earth can thus supply our wants, heal our wounds, bear our burdens, sweeten our afflictions, subdue our enemies, as Christ? O suitable feeding to the soul is here in all cases!

6. It must be *joyful* feeding and provision that comes from the Lamb in the midst of the throne; for the throne is a place of joy and triumph. Here must be the choicest cheer, amidst the choicest company; God, and Christ, and angels, and saints. There is as much sweetness in Christ, as there is fulness and suitableness: he is the fountain of sweetness; his mouth is most sweet, his presence is most sweet, his fruits are most sweet; *I sat down under his shadow with great delight*, says the church, *and his fruit was sweet to my taste*, Song ii. 3. Here are the sweet rivers of living waters, that drive away all death and sorrow, as it follows here in the text.

7. It must be *free* provision and feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midst of the throne. There is nothing to pay about a throne; this would be a disgrace and disparagement to the prince that pos-

sesses the throne; so here, all is to be had freely. The finest feast is always the freest, Isa. lv. 1. The legalists, that cannot feed upon Christ and his righteousness freely, but only on their own works and duties, they *feed upon ashes*: the legal preacher, that cannot offer Christ freely, is like the unnatural fathers, that, when their children ask *bread*, give them a *stone*; when they ask a *fish*, give them a *scorpion*. What is our best performances but scorpions, serpents, stones, yea, poison to them that make them their soul-food? Nothing can feed the soul but Christ. Rabshakeh threatned to *make all the people on the wall to eat their own dung*, 2 Kings xviii. 26. the legal preacher accomplishes this threatening, in a spiritual sense; our best works are but *dung*; *I will spread the dung of your sacrifices on your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts*. But, O Sirs, here the finest and sweetest feast is the freest; from the throne of grace proceed all blessings freely.

8. It must be *durable* provision and feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midst of the throne: for he ever lives upon the throne, and his throne is for ever and ever; and therefore everlasting food comes from thence, and food that nourishes to everlasting life: *I am the living bread that came down from heaven*, says Christ; *if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever*, John vi. 51. Here is provision for eternity, *Labour not for the meat that perisheth*, says Christ, *but for that meat that endures to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you*, John vi. 27. What a fool was he, that filled his barns, and then said, *Soul, take thy rest, thou hast goods laid up for many years!* while God said to him, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee*. But, O what wisdom were it to lay up for eternity this day, that death may not be able to rob you of

your store, but that ye may have it all before your hand! The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne lives for ever there to feed; *he lives for ever to make intercession*; he lives for ever to make provision: they have everlasting food, who have the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne to feed them. — Thus you see what sort of feeding is to be had under the throne of the Lamb, and who it is that must cover our table this day, even the Lamb in the midst of the throne; he hath mounted the throne, to be a feeder, and to let down blessings to the footstool.

VI. The last thing proposed was the *application*. Is it so, that our Lord Jesus is the Lamb in the midst of the throne? Hence we may infer these following particulars.

1. Surely we need not be *ashamed of a crucified Christ*, nor our *Christian passover* this day, the Lamb that was sacrificed for us. Since now the Lamb is upon the throne, and in the midst of the throne, the shame and reproach of the cross are *washed away*, with the glory and splendor of the throne. We need not be ashamed of the cross of Christ, who is now in the midst of the throne. Let none despise those that espouse the cause and interest of the Lamb, whatever hardships they may be brought under before courts, councils, and judicatories on earth: they need not be ashamed to *go forth with him, without the camp, bearing his reproach*. The great apostle Paul says, *God forbid I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*. O believer, it is our greatest glory to be bearing his cross, who is now wearing the crown; to be followers of the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne.

2. Hence we may learn, that the *church of God is safe*, since the Lamb that is their head is in the

midst of the throne. Believers in Christ are happy and safe; their head and husband, their Lord and King, is upon the throne: the militant church, the fighting remnant, are in no great danger while he hath the government. Perhaps there are some here, like Eli, whose *hearts are trembling for the ark of God*, and the work of God at this day, when so many *axes and hammers are lifted up against the carved work* of the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of God's house: but let this be matter of joy to their hearts, that the Lamb is in the midst of the throne; and therefore, as he *rules in Jacob to the end of the earth*, and over-rules all damage done to his house, so he will make it appear in the issue, that according to his word, *Upon all the glory there shall be a defence*, Isa. vi. 5.

zully, Hence we may learn, that the *enemies of Christ* may have a *quaking heart*, since the Lamb, whom they despise, is in the midst of the throne. His Father, that set him on the throne, hath said Psal. lxxix. 23. 'I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. The heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel against the Lord and his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands, and cast their cords from us. But he that sits in heaven shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision: having set his king upon his holy hill in Zion, he will break them in pieces with a rod of iron, and shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, Psal. ii. 1, 9. The Lord reigns, let the people tremble; He dwells between the cherubims, let the earth be moved,' Psal. xcix. 1. The Lamb being in the midst of the throne, is matter of terror to the enemies of his glory; for he sits upon the throne of

power, and the Lamb will be a lion to tear them to pieces.

4. Hence we may learn, there is a *sure foundation* laid for the faith and hope of *life and justification* by the blood of the Lamb. Since the Lamb is in the midd of the throne, the throne of grace is the door of hope; and that our hearts may be raised and lifted up to a lively hope, the Lamb that was slain is raised and lifted up to the throne. Did he rise again for our justification? and does his resurrection seal upon our consciences the sufficiency of his death, and the acceptableness of his righteousness unto God? Much more may our faith and hope be confirmed herein, that he is exalted to the midd of the throne; for his Father had never put so much honour upon him, had he not been infinitely well-pleased and satisfied with his obedience unto the death. We may now read the dream, that Jacob had at Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 12. *Behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; the ladder is the Lamb; the foot of the ladder was fixt in the midd of the earth when he was here in a humbled estate; and now the top of the ladder is fixed in the midd of the throne; all the rounds of it are compleated, that we may ascend by this way from earth to heaven.*

5. Hence we may learn, what good reason there is for having a *high esteem of Christ*, since God hath so highly exalted him, to the very midd of the throne. O believer, should not Christ be very high in our valuation, when God hath set him so high! No wonder then that it is said, *If any man love not, nor esteem our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha; that is, accursed until our Lord come, 1 Cor. xvi. 22.* Woe will be to them that will not put honour upon him, whom God

put so much honour upon, and that as our Redeemer and kinsman!

6. Hence learn, that the throne of God needs not be *terrible* to us, since the Lamb, the meek Lamb, is in the midst of the throne; sinners need not fear to go to the throne of God as long as the Lamb is there. If unbelief look toward the throne, it views it only as it is the *throne of God*, and so fills the soul with slavish fear, and frightful apprehensions: but true faith views it as the *throne of God and of the Lamb*; and the view of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, raises some joy, hope, and pleasure in the midst of the heart. Why, there is meekness, as well as majesty; grace, as well as grandeur, about the throne, because the Lamb is there.

7. Hence we may learn what ground there is to expect the great God to be *present in the midst of us this day*, because the Lamb is in the midst of the throne. We would have no ground to expect that God would be with us on the footstool, if Christ were not with God upon the throne. Christ promised, upon his ascending to the throne, that he would be with his people, saying, *Lo, I am with you always*; Mat. xxviii. 20. He promised, when he went up to the throne, he would send down his Spirit, *If I go away, I will send him*, John xvi. 8. Therefore, if he be, by his Spirit, in the midst of us this day, it is because he is in the midst of the throne. It is easy for him to be both *sitting gloriously in the midst of the throne*, and at the same time *walking graciously in the midst of the golden candlesticks*, Rev. ii. 1. He is both the blest *Δοξα*, the word of God; and the blest Immanuel, God with us. The seven spirits are said to be before the throne. The Spirit of God is one, but his gifts, operations, and

influences are various: and the Lamb, that is in the midst of the throne, hath the Spirit to give; and, having said that *he will send him*, O let us look to the throne, and thence expect the Spirit, according to his word.

8. Hence we may learn what is the mark of a *worthy communicant*, namely, if he be a true believer of this doctrine, that the Lamb is in the midst of the throne. *Let a man examine himself upon this, and so let him eat.* I ask not if you say you believe, or think you believe; but I call and injoin you, try if you truly believe that the Lamb is in the midst of the throne. For helping you to this search, you may consider two things, namely, what *view* you have of this truth, and what *virtue* you find in it.

(1.) What *view* have you of this truth? If you truly believe it, then you view it with *approbation*. Is your heart satisfied that the Lamb is in the midst of the throne? Do you cordially approve of the Father's setting him so high? Did it ever fill your heart with joy and satisfaction, and with some secret pleasure and exultation, that God hath put such honour upon Jesus? And have you thus received this truth in the love of it, and in the sweetness of it? O did ever your heart leap as it were within you to think that the throne of God is also the throne of the Lamb, and is a throne open to you to come boldly unto by the blood of the Lamb, that encircles the throne like a rainbow? How does your heart stand affected to this truth? *With the heart man believes unto righteousness*, Rom. x. 10.

(2.) What *virtue* have you found in this truth for leading you to enthrone Christ, as the Father hath done? As the Father hath set the Lamb in the midst of the throne of glory; so have you set

him in the midst of the throne of your heart? Is he, that is in the midst of the throne of God, in the midst of the throne with you? Surely, *to them that believe he is precious*, [or, an honour,] as the word may be read, 1 Pet. ii. 7. And they put this honour upon him, even to set him in the midst of the throne. O my dear friends, let me tell you, that by this you may try and *examine yourself*, and *prove your ownself*, whether Christ be in you: if he be in you at all, he will be in the midst of the throne. You are not fit for a communion-table, and at your peril be it if you go, and yet some other thing than Christ have the throne of your heart: If *self* be in the midst of the throne, if your *lusts* be in the midst of the throne, Christ is not in you. It is true, the heart of the believer, while here, is not quite free of sin, and self, and the world: they may fight for the throne, and many times they may seem to win the throne of their heart: but, sure I am they never got peaceable possession of the throne of their heart. The believer is free from *peace* with sin, though he is never free from *war* with sin in this world: his league with it is broken, he can never consent to its rule and government any more; and hence, whenever sin usurps the throne, like Adonijah, then the believer enters his protest against it before the King of kings, saying, *Lord, hast thou not said, that Solomon shall reign? Hast thou not promised, that grace shall reign, and that sin shall not have the dominion? O down, down with this usurper; and let Christ have his own proper room and place, which is the midst of the throne. Hath virtue come from the throne of the Lamb to enable you to enthrone Christ in the midst of your heart? Hath he the throne of your esteem, the throne of your delight,*

the throne of your affection? Felt you ever any virtue coming down from the throne of Christ, to dethrone sin, and to draw your heart up to the throne of God? Did you ever find so much grace descending from the throne, as to make your hearts ascend to the throne? And, is it the view of the Lamb's being there, that fires your heart, and makes it flame upward to the very midst of the throne where he is? Again.

Lastly, Hence we may learn the *duty* of sinners that hear this doctrine of the Lamb's being in the midst of the throne. I think it is your duty, yea, sure I am it is your duty, to come and *see* the Lamb in the midst of the throne, to come and *match* with the Lamb, and then to come to the *marriage supper* of the Lamb.

(1.) It is your duty to come and *see* this great sight, the *Lamb* that is in the midst of the throne. If the question be, *Where is the Lamb?* The answer is, In the midst of the throne. But, if the question again be, *Where is the throne, that we may see it, and the Lamb in the midst of it?* We answer, God's throne of glory is properly in heaven; but his throne of grace is really on earth, as well as in heaven; it is erected in the church, and in this gospel dispensation; declaring that *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself*. A God in Christ is a throne of grace every where, and a *glorious throne every where is the place of our sanctuary*; Jer. xvii. 12. Hence, when the apostle says, *Let us come boldly to the throne*, he does not mean locally climbing up to heaven, but *believingly* approaching to God in Christ, as held forth in the gospel of his grace. Why then, as Christ is in the midst of the throne, so the throne is in the midst of this house.

Quest. *What will we see, if we come and see the*

*The Lamb in the
Lamb in the midst of the throne?*

Answ. You will see the throne of God is *patent* to sinners, because the Lamb is there; and that there is *access with boldness* from all quarters, at every side of the throne, because the Lamb is in the midst of it. The blood of the Lamb encircles the throne, and sprinkles the mercy-seat; and therefore, guilty sinners may come, through this guilt-expiating blood. Here you will see the most dreadful attributes of God divested of all their dread and terror, and appearing amiable. Infinite holiness and infinite justice are awful attributes, and both are upon the throne of God, but the Lamb is in the midst of them; holiness is gratified, justice is satisfied, every attribute is glorified; 'Mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other,' and all harmoniously conspire, because the Lamb is in the midst of them. The mildest attributes would be dreadful to sinners, if the Lamb were not in the midst of them; but the most terrible attributes are amiable and lovely, when you see the Lamb in the midst of them.

Here you will see the most terrible dispensations of God *smiling* in your face, when you see the Lamb in the midst of them; for, though *clouds and darkness* are round about him, yet *righteousness and judgment* are the habitation of his throne. He that rides in heaven by his name JAH, and makes the clouds his chariots, as he sits in the midst of his throne; so he sits in the midst of the cloudy and dark dispensations of our day, to order and over-rule. Black clouds are over the church of Scotland, and the government, as it is in the hands of men, is all in disorder and confusion, and turning upside down; but, if you see the Lamb in the midst of these dispensations, you will see that the government is upon

his shoulders; and that not only justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, but that justice and judgment sit with mercy and grace; and that God hath set some glorious design on foot, however terrible to his enemies, yet merciful to all the followers of the Lamb.

In a word, here you will see all the glory of God, when you see the Lamb in the midst of the throne. O the throne of glory is a throne of grace, because the Lamb is there; the throne of justice is a throne of mercy, because the Lamb is there; the throne of infinite holiness is accessible by guilty sinners, because the Lamb is there. O come and see.

(2.) It is your duty to come and *match* with the Lamb. O sinner, who hath been married to the devil hitherto, married to your lusts, married to the world; O man, woman, whether old or young, will you come and be *the bride, the Lamb's wife*? as the word is, Rev. xix. 7. Let none dare to go to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, to the communion-table, until once they have given their heart and hand to the Son of God, and joined in marriage with the Lamb; and, O may this be a marriage-day. It is a great part of our work to court a bride for the Lamb, and then to lead her to the table; and, O may drawing power come from the throne, to draw out many hearts after him! O sinner, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, is come to court your heart, saying, *My son, give me thy heart*; and he is come to offer himself to thee, man; to thee, woman, saying, 'Behold me, behold me; come to me, that you may have life.' What for a match would you have? Would you be well married, and happy in a husband to all eternity?

1. Are you for an *honourable* match, a *royal*

match? O here is the *King of kings*; the *Lamb in the midst of the throne*; the *head of all principalities and powers*.

2. Are you for a *rich and opulent match*? Here is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, in whom are hid *unsearchable riches*, and *all the fulness of the Godhead*; everlasting treasures of grace and glory.

3. Are you for a *bountiful match*? O there is none like the Lamb in the midst of the throne for a generous spirit, willing and ready to lay out all his riches, that *out of his fulness ye may receive and grace for grace*.

4. Are you for a *beautiful match*? Behold the Lamb in the midst of the throne, the *King in his beauty*; he is *white and ruddy*, and *altogether lovely*: no wonder, for he is the *brightness of the Father's glory*; all the glory of God shines in his face. Some of God's glory in the works of creation, the sun, moon, and stars; some of it in the work of providence: but all the glory of God is here. He is the temple of God, and *there doth beauty shine*, *Psalm xcvi. 6*.

5. Are you for a *loving*, as well as a lovely match? Behold, the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne is a mirror of love, without all dimension: 'O the *height and depth*, the *length and breadth* of his *love*!' He loved and prayed for his enemies that murdered him; and how then must he love his friends that will match with him? Again,

6. Are you for a *beloved match*, who is valued and esteemed of all whose love and esteem is worth the regarding? O! the Lamb in the midst of the throne is beloved of all the holy angels, they admire and adore him; he is beloved of all the saints in heaven and earth, they say, *This is our beloved*; he is beloved of God the Father, who says, 'This

“is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased:” he is hated of none but the devil, and his wicked crew.

7. In a word, are you for an *immortal* match? Well, here is the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne, he lives for ever and ever: “I am he that was dead, and am alive, and behold, I live for evermore.” The best friends here in this world are mortal, and may leave you in a moment; but the Lamb is the *King eternal and immortal*: he lives for ever, and he can make you live for ever. O mortal worms, whose bodies will be laid in the dust in a few days or hours, and who have nothing but a thin wall of flesh between you and eternity; are ye for a match that can abundantly jointure you for another world, and portion you for eternity? Is this a despicable bargain? Are your lusts and idols, and perishing vanities of a world, a better bargain? Nay, you dare not say it for your life. This very offer of Christ, accept or reject it as you will, is worth ten thousand worlds.

8. Are you for a match that can pay all your debt to law and justice, that can supply all your wants, that can heal all your diseases, that can bear all your burdens, sanctify all your crosses, sweeten all your afflictions, subdue all your enemies, manage all your concerns, and make you happy for ever? Then come and match with the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne: a greater offer cannot be made to you than this most glorious King, upon the most glorious throne. O great proposal! Wonder, men, and angels, at this gospel offer! Be astonished, O heavens and earth! If such a matchless match be offered and rejected, all the angels and saints that are about his throne will cry, *Shame upon you for ever*, that reject and refuse such a bar-

gain; and we must say, *Amen*; everlasting shame must be upon you. What was the Gadarenes blasphemy, but their preferring their swine to our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was upon the earth, and not yet upon the throne? But greater is your blasphemy, O sinner, if you prefer your swinish lusts to our glorious Lord, now exalted to the throne. What! Prefer the swine, that are in the midst of the dung-hill, to the Lamb in the midst of the throne! O base, brutish, mad, and devilish blasphemy!

I hope, by this time there are none hearing me, but are so self-convicted, that they see they must condemn themselves if they reject such an offer as is made to them; and therefore, I take witness upon it, that when the Lamb, that is now in the midst of the throne of grace, will be the Lamb in the midst of the throne of judgment at the last day, ye must own that the sentence of condemnation, that shall be then past against you, will be just and righteous, if you stand to your refusal: therefore, tho' this should be a rejected offer to-day, yet it shall redound to the honour of the Lamb at the great day, inasmuch that the condemnation of you will be the justification of him; your own consciences witness, that he will be *just when he speaks, and clear when he judges*, and adjudges you to hell and damnation, because of your neglecting the great salvation, and rejecting the offer of the great Saviour, the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne. By way of anticipation, the tribunal is now erected before-hand in your bosom, where God's deputy, conscience, sits as the judge; and there the Lamb is absolved as free of your blood, and the sentence comes forth that your blood is upon your own head. Well, I hope your judgment is per-

suaded of this, that such an offer is made to you, as is worthy of all acceptation: but, O Sirs, since the judgment may be informed and gained, while yet the heart is not engaged; therefore, the faith come by hearing what a worthy Lamb is offered to you, yet bare hearing will not do without the heart drawing power of the Spirit which is before the throne: and therefore, this being the *pure cryстал river, that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*, Rev. xxii. 32. that this river of the drawing influences of the Spirit may run down among you, I will put the best rope in your hand that I know for bringing down this blessing; it is even the Lamb's own sweet promise, John xii. 32. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* Where observe, 1. The persons concerned. 2. The promise. And, 3. The condition of it.

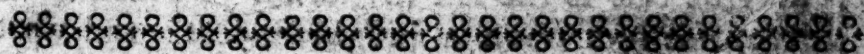
[1.] The persons concerned, *all men.* There is an *all* among sinful men, that Christ the second Adam hath to draw to him; these were given of the Father to him, and they *shall come*, John vi. 37. Yea, these he *must bring* to him, John x. 16. He must draw them, and they shall hear his voice. But, lest any should hereupon say, perhaps I am not among the number of the second Adam's *all*, that he is to draw; perhaps I am excluded by the secret counsel, or hidden decree of God from all eternity. Therefore, I tell you what may satisfy you fully upon this point, that the Lamb, that now is in the midst of his Father's throne, was in the midst of his Father's counsels from all eternity; the Lamb was at that council-table: therefore, let not the thoughts of the eternal decree be terrible and dreadful to you; for the Lamb was upon the concert, and therefore nothing past at that council to the prejudice of any poor sinner, that

would venture his soul upon the blood of the Lamb. It was concerted there that the ground and object of faith should be no hidden counsel, no past decree, but a present openly declared truth; namely, that the *Lamb is in the midst of the throne*; and that *whosoever will, might come to him*; and *him that comes, he will in no wise cast out*: and, therefore, if you venture your life and salvation upon the Lamb that is at present upon the throne of grace, you have nothing either past or future to fear; neither any past decree, or any future wrath: and now, by this free offer of Christ to you all, God is accomplishing his glorious decree, that you may be for ever happy upon your acceptance, or for ever inexcusable upon your refusal.

[2.] *The promise, which is, I will draw all men after me.* In case any should say, there is indeed a free offer, and a good bargain; but I have a reluctant as well as a deceitful heart; I cannot embrace the offer, nor bring up my heart to close with Christ, and make up the match. Why, here is the encouraging promise, *I will draw*; that is, I will send the Spirit to draw out your heart, to make it rise and mount, like a flame, towards the throne, where the Lamb sits. But, if I do not find this drawing power, what encouragement have I to look for it? Why, observe,

[3.] *The condition of this promise, If I be lifted up from the earth*; not an uncertain condition, depending upon us: but a sure condition depending upon himself: *If I be lifted up, or, when I am lifted up.* Now, the condition is performed; Christ was not only lifted up upon the cross, but now he is lifted up to the throne. Now, Christ said, John xvi. 8. 'If I go to the Father, I will send the Spirit;' If I go to the throne, I will send down the

Spirit in his drawing influences. And now, may you not plead, "Lord, the condition is performed, the time is come, thou art lift up, thou art upon the throne; therefore let the crystal river run down out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb?" Is this the language of your heart and soul? Lord, draw, draw; thou that art the Lamb in the midst of the throne, draw my heart to thee, according to thy word. Is your heart burning or beating, saying, "O I am the blackest, the vilest sinner that ever matched with such a glorious one; but yet I find my heart beating and burning within me, saying, O to be drawn, O to have the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne to erect his throne in the midst of my heart, and to rule there in the midst of his enemies, and to be *all in all* to me, for, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to me?" Why then, we may say, your heart is the throne, and the Lamb is in the midst of the throne. And, if the drawing power of his Spirit hath made up the match between him and you, we are warranted to lead you next to the marriage supper, where *the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed you.*



A Word at the Close of the Solemnity on the Monday.

BEFORE you go, I shall conclude this solemn work in two words, one directed to the *enemies* of the Lamb, and another to the *lovers* of the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

First, To you who are *enemies* to him. If the Lamb be in the midst of the throne, then let sinners *sweep* to him; O sink down at his feet, and be

content to be ruled by him: if you be ruled by your lusts, and by your sins, you put Christ out of his throne in effect, and put your lusts in his room. O sinner, consider how you cross and contradict the great God by this means: he hath said of Christ, Psal. ii. 6. *I have set my King upon my holy hill; I have set him in the midst of the throne: and, are you saying to your lusts, Be ye king over me? Man, will ye live in sin, and sin against him that is in the midst of God's throne? If a thief cut a purse when the judge is upon the bench, and the sentence ready to pass against him, he is worthy to be hanged: Christ is on the bench, in the act of judgment; O man, beware of sinning against him: be afraid, O ye that are enemies to the Lamb, Enemies in your minds by wicked works; It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks: can you harden yourself against God and prosper? Nay, you shall be so far from prospering in this way, that the Lamb in the midst of the throne hath a rod of iron, to break and dash you to pieces. Consider this, ye that forget God. The Lamb will in a little while be a lion, to tear you to pieces, when there shall be none to deliver. The Lamb is yet upon the throne of grace, inviting you; but it may be this is the last invitation you shall have, till you see him upon a judgment-seat: and what shall be the effect of these gospel-offers ye have enjoyed? These solemn feasts will not always last, and perhaps death will dash you down to the dust before another occasion of this sort. Can you find in your heart to let Christ go, and this occasion over, without getting any good of him? Are you content that salvation hath come so near you, and you lose it for ever? If not, O will ye take the first opportunity of retiring to some corner, and crying to the Lamb in the midst of the throne, to come and draw*

you, and back these precious means with his powerful blessing! He that is in the midst of the throne hath been setting his throne in the midst of Dunfermline, and saying, *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men!* O let him not lift his tent till you be taken in!

Again, O crown him king whom God the Father hath crowned! O might this be his coronation day! A day of espousals with the Lamb in his coronation-day: Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart, Song iii. 11. Happy day, if you could go away, saying, Such a day, at the communion of Dunfermline, Christ was crowned King; I beheld King Jesus with the crown wherewith his Father crowned him, and saw that the Father set him in the midst of the throne, and I helped to put the crown upon his head; for, through grace, I set him in the midst of the throne of my heart, and crowned him King there: I found in my heart to dethrone sin, and enthrone Christ. O is Christ crowned King here! Hath no virtue come from the throne to draw my heart, as the adamant draws the iron? The clucking of the hen makes the chickens to run: gospel-preaching is the voice of the Lord Jesus; and much of this you have had these days bygone. O have you run under his wings? See what Christ says to Jerusalem, Matth. xxiii. 37, 38. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate.' May we hope that God will not yet leave Scotland desolate, but that Christ will be crowned King in the church of Scotland? though

he be robbed of his royalties, and notwithstanding of all unwarrantable acts that tend to the hurt of his government, he is in the midst of the throne.

2dly, To you that are the *lovers* of the Lamb. I offer first a word of comfort, and then a word of advice!

[1.] A word of *comfort*. Surely, *though the earth should be removed, and the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea; tho' external governments should be dissolved and overturned, yet, while the Lamb is upon the throne, all shall be ruled to advantage unto all the lovers of the Lamb.* What though ye should see ministers of Christ *suspended or deposed* for adhering to the testimony of Christ, and endeavouring to keep a good conscience in an evil day? Though they should be reproached and persecuted, yet still *there is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God:* and still there is this great ground of comfort, that the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, and the crystal river proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb: and upon this throne the Lamb rules righteously and mercifully, though men rule never so unjustly and cruelly; and in a little there will be an end of man's rule and government, but the Lamb's dominion is for ever and ever. God the Father hath proclaimed that he is the everlasting King, saying, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* The followers of the Lamb have unspeakable ground of comfort in Christ, whatever trouble they have in the world, *In the world you shall have tribulation, but in me you shall have peace, be of good cheer; I have overcome the world, and I am now upon the throne; and ye at last shall overcome, and sit down with me on my throne.*

1. Here is comfort against *desertion*. Though the

Lord may hide himself, and seem to be far away; yet still it is food to your faith, that the Lamb is in the midst of the throne; and, as he never deserts the throne, so he will never leave you, nor forsake you: Why? *the promises are all yea and amen in him* that is ever upon the throne, to make out his word.

2. Here is comfort against the *cross*. While you have the cross upon your back, you may keep the throne in your eye, and you may be sure of pity and favour thence, because the Lamb is there who went from the cross to the throne.

3. Here is comfort against the *power of sin, corruption, and spiritual enemies*, be they never so powerful: for the Lamb is upon the throne of power, and *all power in heaven and earth is given to him*; and he is concerned, in honour, to destroy these enemies.

4. Here is comfort against *want and weakness*. Your strength lies in the Lamb, &c.

5. Here is comfort against *church-tyranny*. Times have been, when there was tyranny in the state over the consciences of men; these were reckoned very evil days: but, when there is tyranny in the church over the consciences of men, it is in many respects worse: for church-persecution is a kind of blasphemy; it is in the name of God to persecute the people of God. But yet here is comfort in this case, that church-tyranny cannot keep the throne; *shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?* No, no; *they gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood,* Psal. xciv. 20, 21. The Lamb will keep the midst of the throne, and tread down his enemies in due time.

What would make a church government glorious and eminent? When the Lamb is kept in the

midst of the throne, and when his spiritual kingdom is kept distinct from the temporal kingdoms of this world. The government of the church is quite mismanaged when the Lamb is put out of the throne, and temporal heritages are made the foundation of spiritual privileges: as for example, when in the choice of pastors to any congregation, which is a spiritual privilege relating to immortal souls, and heritors of this earth, the heirs of a little yellow dust, have such a privilege and preference given them by virtue of their temporal inheritance, as if they were *lords of the consciences of men, and lords over God's heritage*; surely their secular advantage in a world can entitle them to no spiritual privilege in the house of God, no more than an earthly inheritance can entitle them to heaven; but to give them a dominion over the souls of men in this matter, is a practical dethroning of the Lamb from the midst of the throne. Church-officers themselves are discharged to usurp such a dominion as to be *lords over God's heritage*: it is unlawful for them to obtrude pastors upon a Christian people, without their consent; far less have they power to put such a dominion over mens consciences into the hands of earthly superiors. How can they give what they have not themselves? In spiritual matters we are to own no man lord, but he that is *Lord of lords, the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne*. Church government is quite overturned, when the throne of Christ's spiritual kingdom is possessed by any other in this world but only the Lamb.

6. Here is comfort against death. Death shall not reign, because the *Lamb is in the midst of the throne, and liveth for ever and ever, and hath the keys of hell and of death*; and therefore death shall be swallowed up in victory.

7. Here is comfort against the fear of judgment; that awful day needs be no terror to the lovers of the Lamb, because when the fiery tribunal will be erected, the Lamb will be in the midst of the throne; and the friends of the Lamb will be received into his bosom, while all his enemies will stand trembling before his throne.

8. Here is comfort in the view of a long eternity, that the Lamb, that is for ever in the midst of the throne, will for ever feed you, and lead you unto living fountains of waters, and wipe away all tears from your eyes. O! who can tell the happiness of the higher house, the glorious feeding and leading you shall have there, the everlasting and everliving fountain of divine consolation, wherewith ye shall be for ever refreshed! The fountain is God, and his glorious attributes; Christ, and his inexhaustible fulness; the Spirit, and his everlasting consolation; a glorious Trinity: God, who is now a promising God, will then be a performing God. Who can tell the sweetness of that blessing, his *wiping away all tears from your eyes*? He that hath a bottle for your tears now, hath a napkin to wipe them all away then; for, 'ye shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'

Secondly, I offer a word of advice to you. O Sirs, if the Lamb be in the midst of the throne, 1. Then be *quiet* amidst all the male-administrations of men, amidst all the mismanagements of churchmen and church-judicatories; because, though men cannot be justified in their church ruining projects, yet the Lamb being in the midst of the throne, hath a just, holy, and sovereign hand in ordering these evils, when he hath a controversy to plead with us. Let us see the hand of God in leaving men to themselves, to rob the church and people

of God of their rights and reformation-privileges. What was the hand of Pilate against Christ, the cruellest act that ever was done? Why, it was the hand of God himself: for it is said, when Pilate spake, saying, 'Dost thou not know that I have power to crucify thee, or to set thee at liberty?' Christ answered, 'Thou couldst have no power except it were given thee of my Father.' Even so say I, church-men or church-judicatories, courts or assemblies, could have no power to break down any of the carved work of reformation; no power to harm the liberties of God's people in chusing their pastors; no power to obtrude ministers on Christian congregations, willing to chuse faithful pastors; no power to pass sentence against such as oppose that speat of defection, except it were given them of our Father; and therefore let us be quiet and sober: we have some other thing ado than to break out in a passionate resentment against poor mortal men, the sinful instruments of the church's confusion and disorder. When Shimei railed upon David, *Let him alone*, says David, *may be the Lord hath bidden him*. The Lord, for our trial and chastisement, perhaps hath required some in our day, go and tread upon the rights of those people; go and reproach and persecute, suspend and depose these ministers for keeping a good conscience in an evil time: I say, it may be the Lord hath bidden; yea, 'Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?' Is there evil in the church, and the Lord hath not done it? No, no; well what of that? This does not justify evil instruments, no; but it says, we are to be sober, and lay our hand upon our mouth, and *bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him*: we are to be dumb, and not to open our mouth, because he does it.

The Lamb in the midd of the throne hath the government upon his shoulders, and he is righteously, ordering and over-ruling these matters for the profitable trial of his people, and the glorious praise of his name in the issue; *The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of his wrath wilt thou restrain.* The Lord hath his own time and way of restraining his enemies, and his own time and way of reforming his church; and when the *Lord shall appear in his glory, he will build up Zion.* Sometimes he sees fit to appear in his wrath, and then he lets out the wrath of man, the enmity of man, to the breaking down of Zion, and of his carved work; but there is another time, when he sees fit to appear in his glory, and then to restrain the wrath of man, and reform his church. And since he is appearing in his wrath in our day, letting out the reins of man's wrath, to the ruining of reformation-work; O be sober and humble, and depend upon him as the Lamb in the midd of the throne, who hath the reins in his hand, to let them out, or take them in, as he pleases. Instruments are but his word, his hand, by which he does what he pleases, Psal. xvii. 13, 14. 'Deliver my soul from the wicked, from men which are thy hand, O Lord.' Think not then the government is out of Christ's hand, when men are doing many sad things, and giving many heavy blows to the work of God; no, no; men are but his hand; and it is the hand of God that justly and righteously is laying heavy upon his people. Look above men then; you have not to do with them; there is a turn of matters just as he is pleased to turn his hand; the Lamb is in the midd of the throne, and in the midd of heavy clouds hanging over Scotland; therefore look to him, that he may turn away his wrath; Psal. ii.

12. 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' Again,

2. If it is only the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne, O then be *tender* of these that are followers of the Lamb, while they are yet upon the footstool, and not yet set down with Christ upon his throne. They are in danger in an evil day, wherein they are called to give testimony against the evils and corruptions of the day, to go aside to some extreme or other. There are many thoughts of heart, and many needles words among people at present about the manner of testifying. Some are accused as if they were too far *foreward*; others are accused as if they were too far *behind*, in their testimony. Well, not to meddle with mistakes people may be under, it may be both these are true: for, who can say, I am clean, and do not err toward the right or left-hand, when they would appear for Christ and his cause? But, O be tender of the militant followers of Christ. I hope you will remember, that it is only the Lamb that is able to keep the midst of the throne; and, I hope, we are all willing to subscribe to this that this honour only belongs to him, that he was able to keep the midst of the way to the throne, without going to one side or other: none but himself was ever able to do so; let him alone have the glory.

3. Let me say to you that have become the bride, the Lamb's wife, if the Lamb be in the midst of the throne, O then see that ye *frequent* the throne. What more inviting argument than this can there be, that the Lamb is in the midst of it? And the farther foreward you approach, so much the better. Never rest till you be in the midst of the throne,

where the Lamb is. You may have boldness to go as far in as the Lamb goes; and you will find this the most pleasant exercise in the world, and the most profitable also: for grace and mercy is about the throne of grace; it is a mercy-seat, because the Lamb is there.

4. O believer, if the Lamb be in the midst of the throne, even the Lamb, your head, your husband, see that you *live upon him by faith*; let the Lamb be your feeder, and the Lamb your food every day; and beware you do not disgrace your honourable husband. Are you married to the Lamb in the midst of the throne? We read that Bathsheba said to her son, Prov. xxxi. 4. *It is not for a king, O Lemuel, it is not for a king to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink.* So it is not for believers in Christ to drink and tittle, to swear and cheat; the graceless world do so. But, O believer, have you been at a communion-table? Hath the Lord graced and honoured you with marriage to the Lamb in the midst of the throne? Do not disgrace yourself; it is below your rank: see that you *live* as becomes these that are matched and married to the *prince of the kings of the earth*.

I remember some years ago, after certain disputing in the church about the doctrine of the gospel, we had a solemnity here, on which occasion I was led to speak of the *substance of GOSPEL-DOCTRINE, Christ given of God to be a covenant of the people*; and now I am obliged to remark, that after some contentings, or rather in the midst of some contentings in the church about the government of his house, I have been led, without any design in me, but only as the text was pleasant to my own soul, to speak of the very *sum and centre of ECCLESIASTICAL GOVERNMENT, the Lamb in the midst of the*

throne. I remember, at that former occasion the Lord was present by his Spirit, and gave evidence thereof unto many; and now, I hope, at this occasion also there shall be some blessings dropt down from the throne. And, O to be going away from this place, with this truth sealed upon our heart, concerning the Lamb's being in the midst of the throne! Come what will, there is no fear of the followers of the Lamb, and the sufferers for him; for, *the Lamb is in the midst of the throne.*

F I N I S.

